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TAGS: [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT DHI QAR: CONFLICT BETWEEN GOV AND PC
INTENSIFIES

[1](#)1. (U) This is a PRT Dhi Qar reporting cable.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Summary: In the past two weeks Aziz Alwan, the ISCI Governor of Dhi Qar, has openly clashed with non-ISCI members of the Provincial Council (PC). The PC initially angered the Governor by refusing to allow funding for a road project which the Governor considered a priority. The Governor/PC conflict then spilled over to the security sector: the PC recently forced the Governor to back down after he attempted to fire General Hussein, the Chief of Police (Da'wa). End Summary.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The power struggle between Governor Aziz Alwan (ISCI) and members of the other principal Shia factions within the governing coalition (Fadhila and Da'wa) has intensified over the past few weeks. The catalyst was a dispute over funding for an upgrade to the Prophet Ibrahim road in Nasiriyah. Governor Aziz considered the road a vital project, but in mid-February, the PC refused to fund the upgrade. The Governor objected that the PC was halting funding to an ongoing project that would take several years to complete. Despite his protests, the project was halted.

[1](#)4. (SBU) On 25 February the conflict spilled over to the area of provincial security. The two principal security agencies in Nasiriyah are the Iraqi Police, headed by General Abdul Hussain (Da'wa) and the Tactical Support Unit (TSU), formerly headed by the late Colonel Abu Liq'a (ISCI). The TSU historically have been loyal to the governor. ISCI

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supporters viewed the Iraqi Police, under Da'wa leadership, as poorly led, unmotivated and ineffective. The Governor recently approached the MOI in Baghdad for permission to remove General Hussain and reportedly gained the Ministry's consent. When the Governor attempted to order General Hussein to stand down from his position, he was openly opposed by the PC, who refused to acquiesce to his demands. General Hussein remained as the Chief of Police.

[1](#)5. (SBU) After the killing of Colonel Abu Liq'a, the Governor moved quickly to replace him with Colonel Abu Liq'a's brother (Major Khalid Jabbery) to ensure that ISCI retained control over this important security agency. ISCI opponents on the PC and General Hussein (now in control of the Provincial Security Committee) blocked Major Khalid's appointment. Local media reports indicate that the opponents want to increase the size of the Committee from four to eight members and to remove the influence of the Governor in selecting the Committee members. On March 3 Col. Qassim Obaid (ISCI), Inspector General of the Dhi Qar IP, was assassinated in Basrah. The PRT suspects, but has no evidence, that his killing is related to growing tension between ISCI and its political opponents.

[1](#)6. (SBU) The infighting between the Shia parties inside the

government has refocused attention on the OMS/JAM in Dhi Qar.

Although the Sadrists remain outside of local government they could play a crucial role if it decided to back a particular faction, and this possibility is adding to growing speculation in Dhi Qar regarding OMS, intentions. With Moqtada al Sadr having extended his truce, most now assume that the mainstream OMS/JAM has some interest in further involvement in "conventional" politics. The more radical JAM elements remain volatile.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: Although tension between the Governor and PC is not new, the aggressive maneuvering on all sides, the willingness of individuals to publicly oppose the Governor, attempts to remove key general offices from the security framework and the resultant breaking of long-standing alliances between both ISF units and political parties all constitute increased tensions. PC refusal to accede to the Governor's wishes on these vital security and budgetary issues is viewed by ISCI and its supporters as a power play meant to minimize ISCI power in a province long-viewed as an ISCI stronghold. Growing ISCI frustration with Da'wa has fueled local speculation that ISCI may be readying to unseat Da'wa in Baghdad. ISCI opponents in Dhi Qar may be trying to undercut ISCI on its home ground to put ISCI on the defensive and head off such a move. End Comment.

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